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TWO COVID-19 DEATHS



Garfield Joseph of Glanvilles is the first reported COVID-19 death in Antigua and Barbuda.

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Local News



PM Browne Extends Best Wishes To Boris Johnson



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Prime Minister, Gaston Browne, has extended best wishes to his British counterpart as he battles the coronavirus, COVID-19 in a London hospital.

55 year-old Boris Johnson was admitted to hospital with persistent symptoms on Sunday evening and has since been admitted to intensive care.

The Antiguan head of government said: "We are deeply concerned by the terrible news that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been admitted to intensive care from symptoms of the coronavirus."

He added he and his government "extend best wishes for a speedy re-

Prime Minister, Gaston Browne, covery and a return of Prime Minisas extended best wishes to his ter Johnson to his duties."

"The prayers of the people of Antigua and Barbuda are with Boris, his family and the British people in general, as we work collectively to rid the world of the deadly COVID-19 virus," Browne was quoted as saying.

Britain's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has said he is 'confident Boris Johnson will recover' from coronavirus, describing the prime minister as a 'fighter'.

Speaking at the daily coronavirus briefing, Raab said Johnson remained in 'good spirits' and was breathing without assistance.



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Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr. Rhonda Sealy-Thomas, right, and MSJMC Medical Director, Dr. Albert Duncan.

Two COVID-19 Deaths

Antigua and Barbuda has recorded its two COVID-19 fatalities, officials have reported late Tuesday.

The first recorded death was that of a 47-year-old man - Garfield Joseph of Glanvilles -who died on Saturday mere hours after being admitted to the country's main hospital, the Mount St. John's Medical Center (MSJMC). The second death was announced Tuesday night by Prime Minister Gaston Browne on his Facebook page. The identity of that individual was unknown up to the time of going to press.

The announcement of the first deathwas made on Tuesday afternoon during a special COVID-19 Update presented jointly by Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr. Rhonda Sealy-Thomas and MSJMC Medical Director, Dr. Albert Duncan.

According to the CMO, Joseph was taken to MSJMC by the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on 4th April 2020. "He was managed for complications of diabetes mellitus but, because of his [condition], he was also suspected of having COVID-19 disease." According to his Facebook page, it appears as though Joseph died on his birthday.

She added that samples for testing were taken from the man and sent to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in Trinidad for testing.

"The patient's immediate management at that time included stabilization, but despite medical intervention, the gentleman passed away in the Intensive Care Unit, or ICU, on the same day of his admission."

She said the test results for the now deceased man "were reported to the Ministry of Health & Wellness on Tuesday as one of 17 samples that were sent to CARPHA on Monday, 6th April 2020".

"Of that 17," Dr. Sealy-Thomas continued, "five samples returned positive."

She explained that "one of these is a repeat, one is the patient who passed away, one is a healthcare worker, and the other two are currently hospitalized at the Mount St. John's Medical Center."

Providing updated figures, the CMO said that "so far there have been 55 persons in Antigua and Barbuda who have been tested for COVID-19 disease. Of these, 19 have been found to be positive and 36 negative."

She disclosed that "three of the 19 are healthcare workers and 12 had a positive travel history."

Elaborating further, Medical Director Duncan said the deceased man "was brought into the emergency room after a two-day history of cough and weakness. He arrived in critical condition and, ultimately, resuscitation failed and he was pronounced dead."

He noted that the man "had a number of co-morbidities which would have made management of this COVID virus very difficult and also very serious."

A family member reported that Joseph was hospitalized just days before he was re-admitted on Saturday for complications related to diabetes, but after two days at the institution he was discharged. Two days later, he was rushed back to the hospital and he died shortly after admittance. The deceased was employed in the maintenanced department at the V.C. Bird International Airport as a plumber. It is unclear where he contracted the virus.

Meanwhile, five more samples are scheduled to be sent to CARPHA for testing today.

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Local News





Two doctors, one nurse among COVID cases

There is word that three health care workers are among the nineteen positive cases of the deadly coronavirus, COVID-19, recorded in Antigua and Barbuda.

Information from health authorities indicate that two doctors and a nurse are among those being treated for the disease. With the revelation on Tuesday that six persons diagnosed with COVID-19 disease are currently hospitalized, and one having passed away, questions naturally arose about the remaining 12 from the total of 19 cases that have been confirmed in Antigua and Barbuda.

That another dozen is recovering at home under continuous medical monitoring, according to the country's Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Rhonda Sealy-Thomas, as she spoke during the latest official COVID-19 briefing on Tuesday afternoon.

"The persons at home would have mild disease," she said, explaining that "they do not have pneumonia or any signs or symptoms or respiratory distress that would require hospitalization."

The CMO assured the nation that "those cases are doing very well. We monitor them daily ..."

Dr. Sealy-Thomas also expressed concern about the fact that three frontline healthcare workers are now among those infected with the life-threatening COVID-19 virus.

She said medical personnel are at

increased risk of infection because they are in direct contact with patients. "It's a challenge for us to determine at times where someone would have picked up an infection."

But she also noted that while transmission from patients to nurses and doctors is always a strong possibility, healthcare providers could also get infected outside their occupational duties and pick up the virus from within the general population.

Perhaps the least comforting – though not necessarily the most unsettling – bit of information coming out of Tuesday's update was that so far no one has recovered from COVID-19 to the extent of becoming

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Commercial Banks to Open On Thursday

Commercial banks in Antigua and Barbuda will open on Thursday for a limited period...but the services they offer will be limited as well.

President of the Bankers Association, Michael Spencer, said all commercial banks will open from 8:00am to 12 noon on Thursday for cash only services.

Spencer said the banks have been urging customers to make use of internet banking or use their ATM cards to conduct business.

However, he noted that the banks recognize that there are some customers who do not possess debit cards nor have internal access.

Therefore, the decision to open the banks tomorrow is to accommodate

these individuals.

Additionally, Spencer said, the announcement of an extended 24-hour curfew for the nation, the banks have decided that they will open for two days each week – Wednesdays and Fridays – from 8:00 am to 12 noon to accommodate customers.

The ABBA president said these hours of operation will continue until further notice.

Meanwhile, Spencer is reporting that individual banks are putting in place measures to reduce the exposure of their staff to possible infection from the COVID-19 virus.

He disclosed that some banks are putting in place glass shields between their tellers and the public and in cases where they are not yet in place...banks are advising customers to stand several feet away from the tellers.

Under the new protocols being instituted, only a limited number of customers are allowed in the bank at any one time and even while queuing up upside, customers are advised to stand at least six feet away from each other.

In related news, the treasury department will be paying out cheques to weekly paid government workers on Thursday, but it will not be open to the general public.

Accountant General, Dr. Cleopatra Gittens said staff of the treasury will report to work tomorrow but it will not be a 'normal' day as only government's weekly wages will be paid.

cont'd from pg 4

virus free.

The first patient to be diagnosed here with the disease on March 12 (a 24-year-old female who arrived by air from the UK) is said to be "recovering nicely", but has tested positive for the virus in two subsequent repeat tests.

"She continues to improve," Dr. Sealy-Thomas said, "she has no symptoms currently. She is back to her normal self ... we are going to look closer at her, because it's a very interesting case, and we need to see what's really happening there."

The CMO explained that the confirmed cases are not

concentrated in a particular area, "But in terms of clusters ... at least four of the confirmed cases are asso-

ciated with travel to Montserrat for the St. Patrick's Day festival ... That's very interesting for us and we're looking at other persons who would have travelled to Montserrat; we're doing surveillance on them."





The 24-hour curfew that has been imposed on Antigua and Barbuda under the state of emergency has been extended for another week.

A special publication of the Official Gazette said the extension takes place from Thursday April 9 at 6:00 am to Thursday April 16, 2020 at 6:00 am.

The state of emergency has been imposed under the Public Health Act (Dangerous and Infectious Disease) (Amendment) No.2 Regulations, 2020.

Signed by the Chairman of the Central Board of Health, Eustace Lake, the extension of the curfew is part of government's move to further control the spread of the dangerous infectious disease COVID-19. Under the statute, the Board 'hereby issues and directs that the following special measures be observed throughout Antigua and Barbuda'.

The curfew restricts movement of all persons, except special categories of workers identified by profession. All other individuals are to remain in their place of residence (homes) during the curfew period. The regulations also describe what the

Curfew Extended wearing of masks now mandatory

law considers as 'place of resident' as follows:

- (1) Freedom of movement of every person in Antigua and Barbuda shall be exercised only in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations.
- (2) Except as provided herein, every person shall remain confined to his or her place of residence (which includes the porch, gallery and yard space of his or her home) to avoid contact with others who do not form part of his or her immediate household occupant.

The Gazette said all businesses and churches are to remain closed across the country except for a few essential services. These include supermarkets, gas stations, pharmacies, banks, credit unions, money transfer services are among businesses permitted to open from 7:00 am to 12 noon daily.

It is now mandatory for persons to wear face masks in public or whenever they leave their homes. "Every



person who is permitted to leave his or her residence for any portion of the curfew period must wear a face mask which completely covers both the nose and the mouth of that person.," Regulations #7 said.

During the curfew period, everyone is also mandated to practice social distancing.

The regulations state as follows;

- (1) Every business permitted by this regulation to operate during the curfew period shall observe the social distancing protocols as follows –
- (a) ensure that all customers and staff maintain physical distancing of no less than six (6) feet in or around

their business;

- (b) determine the number of persons that may be permitted in the establishment at any one time by permitting one person for every fifty square feet of store space:
- (c) place distance markers at six feet interval showing where persons are permitted to stand at a check out point;
- (d) place distance markers at six feet interval to show where persons are permitted to stand while waiting outside of the establishment;
- (2) In addition to social distancing, owners of businesses permitted operate during the curfew period shall ensure that there is a sanitizing station available at the entry to the business and sanitary procedures are observed by all customers.

Residents are also advised that it is now an offence to go the beach during the curfew period. Such acts would be a violation of the law.

The entire issue of the Official Gazette is printed in today's issue of Point Express newspaper.



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Accommodation for Farmers



Farmer Browne's crops in his (5x12 - 60 sq ft) outdoor kitchen planter include: tomatoes, chives, thymes, squashes, okras and sweet peppers. All flowering, bearing or both.

Three agencies of government are coming together to assist the local farming community maintain contact with its customers even though the country is under a 24-hour curfew as part of a state of emergency.

The lead agency, the St John's Development Corporation (SJDC) said in a statement that the move is designed to achieve two main objectives; firstly, to ensure that the curfew does not negative affect farmers' ability to sell their produce, and secondly, to ensure that

both farmers and their customers practice the new health protocols mandated by the Ministry of Health to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

According to the statement, special provisions have been made to accommodate the farmers at the Public Market Complex and the PDO complex, commonly referred to as, Bend Down. On Thursday and Saturday this week, from 7:00 am to 12 noon, farmers will have access to these areas to set up their booths from which they sell their produce.

The other agencies involved are the Police Department and the Extension Division of the Ministry of Agriculture.

SJDC is going a step further to assist both the farmers and their customers by putting in place water stations where they can practice good hygiene by washing their hands regularly. This has been proven as one of the ways to reduce the spread of the virus.

The Extension Division will update farmers of any changes now that the curfew hours have been officially extended.



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Local News



MBS Makes Available Critical Services

People who regularly access services from the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS) are being told not to worry as three critical areas of its operations continue to function during the curfew hours.

A release from MBS is advising the general public that it continues to provide essential services to its beneficiaries and stakeholders.

"These services offered are consistent with the guidelines of the State of Emergency imposed by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in response to the COVID-19 pandemic," the release stated.

It identified the Antigua Barbuda Central Medical Procurement Unit (ABCMPU) managed and operated by the MBS which continues to provide critical institutional support in the form of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, to the Mount St. John's Medical Centre (MSJMC), public clinics and our first responders.

In addition, the services of the ABC-MPU can be accessed weekdays from 8:00am to 4:00pm. MBS continues to provide limited pharmacy service to beneficiaries daily. The MBS pharmacies located at Nevis Street, Clare Hall and Browne's Avenue will operate a drop-off service only, Monday to Friday, from 8:00am to 11:00am. Beneficiaries will be able to pick-up completed prescriptions in 48-hour.

Beneficiaries are also reminded to refill their prescriptions when they have at least 5 days, but not more than seven days of medication left. Social distancing and hand sanitizing protocols are enforced at all MBS pharmacies. Employers can also make payment by sending their remittance forms and monthly contributions electronically.

All R3A's (Remittance Form) can be sent to email address contributions@ mbs.gov.ag and should be signed by an authorized person. Employers can make payments to MBS via electronic funds transfer, using the following bank detail;

MBS Bank: Antigua Commercial Bank Ltd

MBS Account Number: 0100004425 Routing Number: 01320695

Employers without access to electronic banking can place R3As and cheque payment for monthly contributions in a drop off facility at the main MBS Pharmacy on Nevis Street during the hours of 8:00am and 11:00am.

Contributions paid into MBS support the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 response, provide critical pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to the MS-JMC, and medication for thousands of beneficiaries in Antigua and Barbuda.



Payment of Contribution

available 24 hours electronically or via Drop Box

We are accepting R₃As and Monthly Contributions via Dropbox at our Nevis Street Pharmacy from 8:00 am to 11:00 am.

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Pay your monthly contributions via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT):

Banking information ______ Medical Benefits Scheme
Beneficiary Account # _____ 0100004425
Beneficiary Bank _____ Antigua Commercial Bank
Routing # _____ 001320695

Email signed PDF file of R3As to: Contributions@mbs.gov.ag

These amendments are in light of the Government's imposed State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOTICES

VOL: XL

Tuesday 7th April, 2020

No. 21

No. 14

The following STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS are circulated with this Gazette and form part thereof:

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

No. 26 of 2020, "The Prevention of Terrorism (Security Council Resolution) (Amendment) (No.6) Order, 2020"

5pp Price \$2.25

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (DANGEROUS INFECTIOUS DISEASE) (AMENDMENT)

(NO. 2) REGULATIONS 2020

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT 2020, NO. 27

Regulation

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ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (DANGEROUS INFECTIOUS DISEASE) (AMENDMENT)

(NO. 2) REGULATIONS 2020

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

2020, NO. 27

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (DANGEROUS INFECTIOUS DISEASE) (AMENDMENT) (No. 2) REGULATIONS 2020, made by the Board pursuant to Section 102 of the Public Health Act, Cap. 353.

1. Citation and commencement

- (1) These Regulations may be cited as the Public Health Act (Dangerous Infectious Disease) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 2020.
 - (2) This regulation shall come into effect at 5:59a.m. on Thursday the 9th day of April, 2020.

No. 21 THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA OFFICIAL GAZETTE - EXTRAORDINARY

April 7th, 2020

2. Interpretation

In these Regulations –

"principal Regulations" means the Public Health Act (Dangerous Infectious Disease) Regulations 2020, Statutory Instrument No. 16 of 2020

3. Repeal and replacement of Regulation 5A

The principal Regulations are amended by repealing and replacing Regulation 5A as follows –

"5A. Special measure applicable to the period 9th April to 16th April, 2020

For the further control of the spread of the dangerous infectious disease COVID-19, the Board hereby issues and directs that the following special measures be observed throughout Antigua and Barbuda:

1. Duration

These special measures shall take effect from 6:00a.m. on Thursday 9th April 2020 to 6:00a.m on Thursday 16th April, 2020.

2. Restriction on freedom of movement

- (1) Freedom of movement of every person in Antigua and Barbuda shall be exercised only in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations.
- (2) Except as provided herein, every person shall remain confined to his or her place of residence (which includes the porch, gallery and yard space of his or her home) to avoid contact with others who do not form part of his or her immediate household occupant.

3. Mandatory Curfew

- (1) A mandatory 24-hour curfew shall be in effect from 6:00a.m. Thursday 9th April, 2020 to 6:00a.m. Thursday 16th April, 2020 (referred to herein as the "curfew period").
 - (2) Subject to this regulation, the curfew period will not apply to individuals who are involved in a medical emergency.

4. Closure of all businesses and exceptions

- (1) Except as provided in this regulation and subject to subparagraph (2) all businesses shall remain closed for the duration of the curfew period.
- (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of this regulation, no business activity or service not listed in the Schedule to the Essential Services Act, 2008 shall be permitted to open or operate on Friday 10th April, 2020 (Good Friday), Sunday 12th April, 2020 (Easter Sunday) and Monday 13th April, 2020 (Easter Monday).
 - (3) The following services, whether provided in a private or public capacity may continue during the curfew period –
 - (a) doctor's offices;
 - (b) clinics;
 - (c) pharmacies;
 - (d) provision of healthcare services and residential care services:
 - (e) residential or elderly care facilities and establishments;
- (4) The following businesses are permitted to open and operate only between the hours of 7:00a.m. to 12:00noon. each day
 - (a) fish and meat markets, abattoirs;
 - (b) vending of agricultural produce;
 - (c) wholesale or retail grocery stores, supermarkets and community shops;
 - (d) gas stations;

- (e) critical cleaning services, sanitation workers;
- (f) authorised delivery services of necessities (food, groceries, medicine, water, fuel);
- (g) Banking Institutions licensed under the Banking Act 2015;
- (h) Credit Unions
- (i) Money gram and Western Union Money Transfer Services for the purpose of receiving moneys only.
- (5) Registered livestock and vegetable farmers are permitted to be at their farms between the hours of 4:00a.m. and 6:00p.m.
- (6) Licensed fishermen are permitted operate during the curfew period between the hours of 2:00a.m and 6:00a.m.
- (7) Public transportation services are permitted to operate during the curfew period from 6:00a.m. to 7:00 p.m. provided the operator of the public transport and the passengers wear a face mask and the passengers are seated in a staggering formation with one person in every row that would normally accommodate 2 persons and no more than 2 persons in the back seat.
- (8) The curfew period shall not apply to persons who are employees or officers of the following –
- (a) The Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda including the Fire Brigade;
- (b) The Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force;
- (c) Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP);
- (d) Customs and Excise Department;
- (e) Immigration Department;
- (f) Mount Saint John's Medical Centre;
- (g) Emergency Medical Services and E-911 Services;
- (h) Media workers and other employees of a broadcasting service to the extent that they are traveling for work;
- (i) Her Majesty's Prison;
- (j) Air Traffic Control Services;
- (k) Meteorological Services;
- (1) LIAT (1974) Ltd.
- (m) Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority;
- (n) Telecommunication Service providers;
- (o) Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority;
- (p) Businesses licensed to provide private security services;
- (q) Commercial Banks and Credit Unions to the extent required to facilitate ongoing automatic banking services.
- (r) all members of Parliament,
- (s) the Treasury Department, as determined by the Accountant General;
- (t) the Inland Revenue Department, as determined by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue;
- (u) National Solid Waste Management Authority;
- (v) healthcare workers and employees of allied health care services;
- (w) critical construction services (limited to BHM, Meridian Construction Company and CCECC);
- (x) Brokers and Shipping agents

5. Public Service, Statutory Bodies, State-owned enterprises and the Magistrates Court

- (1) Subject to subparagraph (3), members of the public service who are not employed in the provision of services under paragraph 4(8) are permitted to work during the curfew period based on the instructions of the Permanent Secretary of the Department or Division.
- (2) Subject to subparagraph (3) employees of statutory bodies are permitted to work during the curfew period based on the instructions of the Director or Chairman of the Board of the Statutory Body.
- (3) All Permanent Secretaries within the civil service, and the Directors and Chairmen of Board of the Statutory Bodies shall encourage and support employees in working from home to the extent that this is possible.
 - (4) The Magistrates' Court shall continue to function as advised by the Chief Magistrate.

6. Social Distancing Protocol

(1) Every business permitted by this regulation to operate during the curfew period shall observe the social distancing protocols as follows –

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April 7th, 2020

- (a) ensure that all customers and staff maintain physical distancing of no less than six (6) feet in or around their business;
- (b) determine the number of persons that may be permitted in the establishment at any one time by permitting one person for every fifty square feet of store space;
- (c) place distance markers at six feet interval showing where persons are permitted to stand at a check out point;
- (d) place distance markers at six feet interval to show where persons are permitted to stand while waiting outside of the establishment;
- (2) In addition to social distancing, owners of businesses permitted operate during the curfew period shall ensure that there is a sanitizing station available at the entry to the business and sanitary procedures are observed by all customers.

7. Wearing of face mask in public

- (1) Every person who is permitted to leave his or her residence for any portion of the curfew period must wear a face mask which completely covers both the nose and the mouth of that person.
- (2) No person is permitted to be in any motor vehicle, supermarket, market, or in any street or in any public place without wearing a face mask

8. Education and religious instructions

- (1) Subject to subparagraph (2), all religious and educational places of instruction or worship shall remain closed.
- (2) Subparagraph (1) shall not prohibit any activity referred to therein if done by electronic or virtual means.

9. Restriction on social gathering

- (1) No person shall –
- (a) host or attend at any private party which includes any person from outside of his or her immediate household occupant;
 - (b) attend or participate in any organised sporting event or any sports stadium;
 - (c) hold any banquet, ball or reception;
 - (d) any social event.
 - (2) For the duration of the curfew period –
 - (a) weddings;
- (b) meeting of a fraternal society, social or private club, civic organisation or association, are banned.
- (3) Funerals, if held during the curfew period, must be conducted in the cemetery with no more than ten (10) mourners, the officiant, two (2) representative from the funeral home and two (2) persons employed to work in the graveyard, all of whom shall practice social distancing and wear a face mask.

10. Restriction on Road Traffic

- (1) No person shall drive any vehicle on any public or private road except for the purpose of –
- (a) transporting someone who has a medical emergency;
- (b) going to the supermarket or any of the businesses permitted to open pursuant to this regulation;
- (c) going to an automatic banking machine within the period 7:00a.m. to 12:00p.m;
- (2) Only the driver and one other person are allowed to be in a private vehicle.

11. Absolute restriction on the movement of children

No person under the age of eighteen (18) years is permitted to be on any street or in any vehicle, whether a private or public transport, during the curfew period, except in the event of a medical urgency.

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No. 21

12. Closure of Beaches

All beaches are closed for the duration of the curfew period.

13. Approval of other measures

Measures implemented by the Port Authority, Customs or Immigration division to control the Spread of the dangerous infectious disease in their scope of operations shall not be held to be in conflict with these Regulations.

14. Extension of measures

The Board may, by notice published in the State media and on Government website, extend the period of curfew, or in its discretion, modify or discontinue any measure, but subject to the modification or discontinuance being published in the official *Gazette* as soon as possible thereafter."

15. Offence

A person who fails to comply with these special measures commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand (\$5,000.00) dollars or to imprisonment for six (6) months or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Made the 4th day of April, 2020.

Eustace Lake Chairman of the Central Board of Health

Regional News



OECS Commission mobilizes EC\$1.2M in resources to help fight the spread of **COVID-19 in the Eastern Caribbean**



With the number of cases around the world increasing daily, the onslaught of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to be a massive threat to the various sectors within the Eastern Caribbean. This pandemic emphasizes the need for greater collaboration and a progressive movement towards sustainable development among its Member States.

Ahead of the first Sustainable Development Summit (SDM2020) scheduled for later this year, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission said the event is designed to bring heads, hands and hearts together, with a determination to provoke regional harmonization and a paradigm shift.

The Director General of the OECS Commission, Dr. Didacus Jules said.

"Life as we know it has been drastically changed and as a consequence of this pandemic, we are examining all possibilities; and galvanizing our efforts in the fight against this disease, which will help us ensure that when the time is right, we are safe enough to convene for the SDM Summit."

Channeling resources through the Commission's Pharmaceutical Procurement Service (PPS) system - a proven economic strategy used by the Commission for many years - is one of several strategies being employed by the OECS Commission in response to the COVID disease.

The OECS was nimble at scaling up these activities under the PPS model to conduct swift mass purchasing of critical medical supplies to be distributed across the region. The system leverag-

Member States and ensures equitable availability and affordability of essential drugs for citizens, health organizations and retailers. This mass purchasing helps both citizens and organizations prepare for longer periods of self-isolation and possible worldwide shortage of essential drugs and testing supplies.

Dr. Jules explains that while the Commission is still executing plans to strengthen regional support by hosting the SDM 2020 Summit,

"The immediate focus is for the OECS to remain at the coordinating centre of the COVID-19 response efforts. Our role is to keep that dialogue going; and maintain that convergence of policy and action well beyond September. We also have a WhatsApp group with the heads of government; so these exchanges are happening in real time."

He noted that this level of tight-knitted regional cooperation between government heads is one of the primary premises of the Commission and the glue that birthed the concept for the Sustainable Development Movement.

Adding to this sentiment, Head of Health, Human and Social Cluster for the OECS Commission, Dr. Carlene Radix said,

"Our joint effort response

es economies of scale for the to COVID-19 is part of the 'MOVEMENT' concept. In our role as the Health Unit within the Commission we work closely with partner health organizations within the region - the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) - to facilitate coordination and synergies. We have collaborated with these organizations to identify gaps and provide solutions to all the Member States at every level."

> In addition to maximizing the power of the PPS system. Dr. Radix added that the OECS Health Unit is embarking on several integrated response approaches, one of which is leveraging the Commission's convening power to get chief medical officers to work together and take a closer look at situations that may be unique to the smaller islands.

> Through this harmonious model of operation, the OECS was able to help the Member States better assess and articulate their needs for medical supplies, human resources and measures that are needed to curb the spread of the virus.

> Furthermore, several businesses have provided funding under the OECS Partnership Against COVID-19: Engaging the Region's Private Sector initiative.

POINTE PRESS

Regional News

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Thanks to Massy Stores Saint Lucia, Sagicor Life (EC) Inc, Republic Bank, Bank of Saint Lucia and LU-CELEC, over USD\$450,000 (EC\$1.2 million) has been mobilized to date. Resources will be distributed across the Eastern Caribbean including medical supplies, education programmes, purchasing of infrared thermometers, aid with lab testing and the implementation of a COVID-19 awareness campaign across the Member States.

The OECS Commission is sparing no effort to combat the virus and its ramifications. Exploring solutions and mobilizing global resources not just in health, but on all fronts including education, social, environmental and economic sectors. So far, the Republic of Cuba has provided human resource support, where doctors and nurses are being deployed across the Member States; while a mass supply of personal protective equipment from Direct Relief, including N95 masks, gloves and gowns, were received. Adding to the COVID-defense operations, the OECS Commission has also requested a supply for Real-Time (RT) PCR laboratory equipment produced by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria.

Dr. Jules noted that,

"The IAEA will also be providing training for doctors and lab technicians, who will be handling and activating the RT PCR device. He noted that the device would tremendously boost testing capability within the region and provide quick turnaround time for results."

Head of the OECS Development Cooperation and Resource Mobilization Unit; and chief project coordinator for SDM2020, Lisa Stone-Taylor, reiterated that

"The PPS model and its handling of pandemics will be on full display at SDM2020; giving businesses, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and other countries an opportunity to learn about the PPS mecha-

nisms and possibly join the partnership."

She added that,

"As we explore the opportunities that this pandemic has presented, COVID-19 is forcing us to be agile and is bringing to the forefront the need for all of us to look at sustainability through different focal lens. Once the COVID ordeal has passed and it becomes safe for social gatherings to resume, SDM2020 will create a space for these discoveries and provide a platform for the launch of several pioneering models and programmes for multi-sectoral impact."

While it is still very early days in analyzing the true impact of the OECS strategy, the OECS Director General noted some key lessons for future crisis planning.

"The first lesson is the importance of having a strategic mind-shift that emphasizes vulnerability to resilience; we define resilience as a multidimensional construct – climatic, environmental, social [including

health and well-being], economic, infrastructural and psychological. Ever since the double whammy of Hurricanes Irma and Maria which wrought devastation to several OECS Member States, we have been re-defining what resilience should mean for us as Small Island Developing States.

The second lesson is the vital importance of a deep functional integration among the OECS Member States. This will ensure that there is policy convergence, compliance with vital international protocols (for example the International Health Regulations), sharing of resources and joint procurement of critical needs, harmonization of initiatives," Dr. Jules said.

Finally, Dr. Jules noted that "This is a stark reminder that this pandemic presents some consequences of our failures; we ought to learn from our history to strategically position ourselves for the future. Future-proofing is not a luxury; it is an imperative."



Regional News



CDB to provide US\$3M for equipment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic



CDB Vice-President (Operations), Monica La Bennett.

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is providing funds to purchase personal protective equipment needed by its Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs) to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Bank's Board of Directors recently approved US\$3 million for the procurement of these urgently needed supplies.

According to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDE- MA), personal protective equipment, such as masks, goggles, gloves, and safety gowns are among the priority items required by BMCs to enhance their COVID-19 preparedness and response. CDB will centrally procure this protective equipment.

"With the disruption of supply chains, increased demand, and soaring prices, the Caribbean Development Bank will purchase personal protective equipment in bulk to achieve greater value for money and certainty of supply to frontline helpers who are fighting the COVID-19 pandemic," said CDB Vice-President (Operations), Monica La Bennett.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, the Pan American Health Organisation, and the Caribbean Public Health Agency, which are responsible for emergency response coordination for the Region's health sector, will work closely with national governments to identify their needs. In partnership with CDEMA, the Bank will distribute the equipment to eligible Borrowing Member Countries.

CDB's response to COVID 19 to date includes US\$140 million, which will be directed mainly towards the most vulnerable groups and give the highest priority to strengthening social safety nets in Borrowing Member Countries.

Regional News

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'Sexual violence' incident during 24 - hour lockdown saddens Minister Rigobert



Dr. Gale Rigobert

The Minister of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development, Hon. Dr. Gale Rigobert has expressed deep sadness over the news of a reported case of sexual violence during the 24-hour lockdown period, as part of the Government of Saint Lucia's efforts at reducing the community spread of COVID-19.

Recent incidents bring to the fore the increased risks for gender-based violence associated with sudden and unexpected changes in the lives and livelihoods of citizens. The minister is urging the general public to demonstrate its sense of community by looking out for the most vulnerable in our communities. This includes our children and our women, especially in remote and underserved areas. The Division of Gender Relations and its partners, especially those offering essential services for gender-based violence, quadrupling efforts to ensure that there is increased access to information on gender-based violence – what it is, how we can each play our part to eliminate gender-based violence, and where we can get help. The Division is calling on all citizens to pay attention to the public service announcements (PSAs), to peruse and like the Women's Support Center, Crisis Center and Division of Gender Relations Facebook pages and to visit the Department of Education, Innovation and Gender Relations website for useful information on how you can help to stop gender-based violence.

We also take the opportunity to appeal to essential services workers to be more vigilant than usual, adopting the principle of if you see something, say something, as the usual first contacts for persons at risk are no longer available.

Essential service workers have now become first contacts for the most vulnerable who are hardly ever the ones to seek help for themselves.

We appeal to the general public to call the 202 hotline for intimate partner violence and the 203 helpline for other types of crises. Both lines operate a 24-hour service. Call 999 for criminal emergencies and 911 for medical and fire emergencies. These services are meant to help you and to make it easier to get help to you. You can dial these numbers from any phone at any time.

Minister Rigobert appeals to the general public to show greater empathy and compassion and to exercise tolerance and respect. "COVID-19 is a test of our mettle and is a true test of our resilience, faith and strength. We need our energy and every bit of our mental capacity and health to go through this unpredictable situation. We can do it together. Let us look out for one another and play our part to end gender-based violence in our own corners," Dr. Rigobert said.

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International



Coronavirus warship row: Acting US Navy secretary resigns



The acting secretary of the US Navy has resigned amid uproar over his handling of a coronavirus outbreak on an aircraft carrier.

Thomas Modly fired the USS Theodore Roosevelt's captain after he pleaded for help in a letter leaked to media. Mr Modly apologised on Monday after it emerged he had called Captain Brett Crozier's actions "naive" and "stupid".

The secretary's exit comes a day after US President Donald Trump signalled he might get involved in the dispute.

Defence secretary Mark Esper said Mr Modly had "resigned of his own accord". The Pentagon chief said the crew's health and safety were a priority for the department. Army Undersecretary James McPherson is expected to replace Mr Modly.

Capt Crozier was fired last week, and footage of his crew sending him off the warship with applause went viral.

Mr Modly flew 8,000 miles on Monday to the Pacific island of Guam, where the USS Theodore Roosevelt is docked, and berated the crew for having cheered the captain as he left the ship.

Mr Modly told the crew what their former captain did "was very, very wrong" and amounted to "a betrayal of trust with me, with his chain of command", according to recordings leaked to US media.

"If he didn't think that information was going to get out into the public... then he was a) too naive or too stupid to be the commanding officer of a ship like this," Mr Modly said. "The alternative is he did it on purpose."

Amid rebukes from members of Congress, Mr Modly issued an apology the same day, saying: "I do not think Captain Brett Crozier is naive nor stupid. I think and always believed him to be the opposite."

Capt Crozier sent a let-

ter to defence officials on 30 March begging for assistance with a coronavirus outbreak on his vessel, which has more than 4,000 crew."We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die," he wrote, requesting the quarantine of nearly the entire crew. When asked about the controversy on Monday, President Trump told reporters: "You have two good gentlemen and they're arguing. I'm good at resolving arguments."

The president said he "heard very good things" about Capt Crozier and did not want his career to be ruined "for having a bad day", but added that "the letter should not have been sent to many people unclassified".

The US Navy is investigating Capt Crozier's actions.

Democratic lawmakers in Congress have called for an inquiry into the decision to fire the captain. Former Vice-President and current Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden also spoke out. He said Capt Crozier's firing was "close to criminal" and he should have been commended for saying "what had to be said".

Over 155 of the aircraft carrier's crew have tested positive for Covid-19. More than 1,000 sailors who have tested negative for the virus are ashore in Guam, quarantining in hotels.

International

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Grisham leaving as White House press secretary after holding no formal briefings

After less than a year on the job, White House press secretary and communications director Stephanie Grisham is stepping down, according to senior Trump administration officials.

Grisham is returning to the East Wing to start immediately as first lady Melania Trump's chief of staff and spokesperson, her office announced Tuesday. She previously served in the East Wing as communications director and deputy chief of staff.

Sources tell ABC News Kayleigh McEnany, a spokesperson for the Trump campaign, will transition to the West Wing to fill the role of press secretary.

In February, McEnany said during an interview with Fox Business that, thanks to President Trump, "we will not see diseases like the coronavirus" come into the country. At the time, the United States had over a dozen cases, and since then, hundreds of thousands more Americans have been infected.

Alyssa Farah, a Pentagon spokesperson and longtime aide to Trump's new chief of staff Mark Meadows, will be named as the White House's director of strategic communications, according to sources. Ben Williamson, a senior adviser to Meadows, is expected to become a senior communications adviser in the press office.

As Trump's third press

secretary, Grisham replaced Sarah Sanders in July 2020. As communications director, she succeeded former Fox News executive Bill Shine, assuming the role after it had been left vacant for a number of months. Her appointment was announced in a tweet by Melania Trump last June.

Grisham has been a long-serving member and loyal of the Trump administration, beginning as a campaign aide in 2015 and later serving as a deputy press secretary under Sean Spicer. Grisham developed a reputation for prioritizing the first family's privacy while working for the first lady.

Through her tenure as press secretary, Grisham never gave a traditional briefing, saying they had become "a lot of theater." She has publicly criticized the press a number of times, asserting that the media does not regularly cover the president's successes.

Last month, Grisham spent two weeks in self-quarantine after coming into contact with a Brazilian official who tested positive for COVID-19. She tested negative for the virus.

Grisham fervently defended the president throughout his impeachment, appearing on a number of news programs, including ABC's "Good Morning America" last December. In that interview with ABC News Chief Anchor George Steph-

anopoulos, Grisham adamantly insisted the president "did nothing wrong" in regard to withholding aid from Ukraine. She also attempted to justify derogatory comments Trump made about the deceased husband of a Michigan congresswoman who supported his impeachment, saying the president was a "counter-puncher."

Grisham came under fire in November 2019 for

claiming without evidence that Obama administration aides left behind taunting notes for incoming Trump officials as they vacated their White House offices in 2017. A number of Obama staffers flatly denied leaving any negative messages, and some even shared letters of encouragement that they said they left behind for their successors.



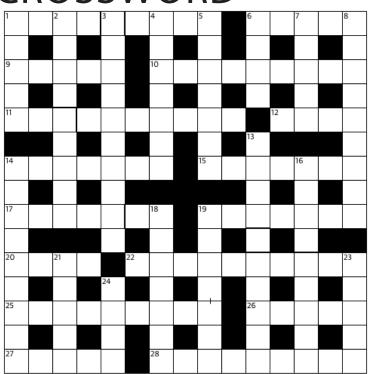
White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham listens as President Donald Trump speaks to the media aboard Air

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Leisure



CROSSWORD

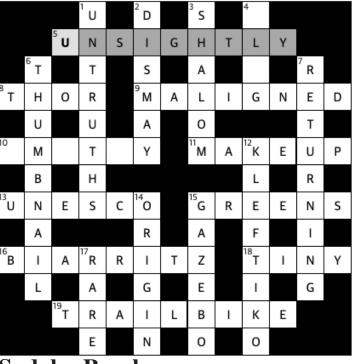


Across

- President's in la-la land! Go and quickly! (4,1,4)
- 6 She's suffering daily (5)
- 9 Greek primate's eaten shellfish (5)
- 10 Insists chief isn't a criminal (9)
- 11 See women planning trips with kids. occasionally
 - one's down with them (3,7)
- 12 Annoyance to the royals? That's heartless and unkind (4)
- Maine bankers invested in US money and bonds (7)
- 15 Conserving energy, passes on the wacky baccy (7)
- 17 Mentions bishop's missed calls (5,2)
- 19 Artist carrying can shouts at pack (7)
- 20 Shallow and largely fake bigly! (4)
- 22 Odd square in the centre awfully quiet (10)
- Valuing mostly art? Unlikely he's got money but no taste (9)
- Very, very angry losing head that's clear (5)
- 27 Thoroughbred irritated over what it's carrying (5)
- 28 Times empty on day Murdoch's writers taking the mick (9)

Down

- 1 Allowed American tax evader to take stage first (5)
- 2 Liberal take on MP entertaining with mistress (4,5)
- Surprised at bone spurs (nothing cut out) that's being rude! (10)
- 4 Men getting brown stopping in sun (7)
- 5 Laugh about Washington's leader what's he on? (7)
- 6 Slow learner gets letter wrong way round (4)
- 7 Spin a lot of rubbish (5)
- 8 Tricks boy's acquired they're inflammatory! (9)
- 13 Enjoying a good relationship? First Lady's reticent at first
 - I wasn't expecting that ... (4,1,5)
- 14 ... mind you, she does say Vlad's right about Republican at the top (9)
- 16 Game is on TV fee to be arranged (4,5)
- Experts, quiet ones, impress department (7)
- Shelter to put up poor person (4-3)
- Moved furtively heading off, but didn't do anything (5)
- Charges youngsters over ecstasy (5)
- 24 Picked up passenger OK (4)



Sudoku Puzzles

7	9	4		8			3	2
	2	1	4			5	9	
3		5						4
1	3	9		6	5		2	
			2	4	3			
	4		7		1			
4	5	3				8		
	6	7		5		3		9
		8	3				5	

DAILY CARTOON



Leisure

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DAILY HOROSCOPE



Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

There's a direct line between your work and your money today, and it could bring you some surprising opportunities. Whether you focus this energy on spending or saving is up to you, just keep an eye on your urges for unplanned extravagance. You may also seek to create a connection between feeling fulfilled in your daily routine and how you earn resources to fund your life choices. It can be wildly liberating to seek out new possible avenues for work and wealth, as long as you don't spend your imaginary new dollars before they've arrived.



Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)

You have something to share with the world, a unique point of view that is itching to be expressed. Today's energies offer you new insights into yourself, your modes of operation, and how you can infuse a little more creativity into your everyday life. Spend time imagining yourself in a new setting and devote attention to the hobbies that make you feel most inspired now. Revelations can come from unlikely places, so lean into the things that make you feel good and watch as new buds begin to bloom.



Gemini (May 21 - Jun 20)

Your past is calling you today, ready to be viewed with new eyes and a fresh perspective. Perhaps this will unlock new solutions to your biggest worries or illuminate assumptions you didn't know you held. Take the day to inventory the beliefs you were raised with and what new traditions you're ready to claim for yourself that will strengthen your early foundations. If you're having trouble tapping into what ails you, change up your work space or move items in your home. An updated view can encourage updated viewpoints.



Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Look to your social network today for ideas on how to bring more meaning to your own routines, especially as it relates to turning the things you love into small, devotional acts. Consider setting time aside each day to do something that helps you feel connected to the people who matter most to you. Scheduling regular telephone sessions, going through old letters, or including more pictures of friends in your space can serve as an important reminder of the abundant love you've cultivated. Sometimes it's the little things that can spark the greatest joy.



Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)

Despite any financial fears that may arise for you now, you hold the keys to your fiscal future. You could be given the gift of autonomy at work, and it would be best leveraged by brainstorming different avenues to achieve success. If you have ideas in meetings, don't hesitate to speak up. If you see new ways of solving old problems, show others the brilliance of your ways. Today offers one-of-a-kind perspectives that could pay off financially for you, as long as you ground them into practical solutions and not rogue acts of rebellion.



Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22)

There are unique points of view to be gained from the larger world, and you may yearn to explore your way through life's biggest questions. It could be emotionally fulfilling to step into new territory that is well outside of your normal comfort zone. Take small risks that help you expand your horizons, without the need for permanent change. Read articles about cultures that embrace your values, seek information that furthers your spiritual path, or plan a future vacation. Seeking growth has the potential to enrich you in unexpected ways.



Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You may be presented with an unexpected resource of some kind today, either from the physical or spiritual realm. Whether you find money on the street or you're given a symbolic message from a loved one who has passed, you are reminded you're connected to the flow of the universe and all its gifts. Tokens like this can hold rich potential, even if they're just felt internally. If you're unsure of which blessings are finding their way to you, spend time in quiet solitude. It's only then that you can tune into the subtle clues coming from the cosmos.



Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Your closest companions are on your mind in a big way now. Whether it's an unexpected call from a good friend or a loved one reaching out to you, this is a day for making connections that enliven you. External input is the best way to see yourself clearly and you may get that in spades today. You could find yourself on the receiving end of heartfelt suggestions or advice. There is wisdom in these messages, despite the words being used to convey them. Sort through the noise and you'll find the truth.



Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Your attention is being drawn to the ways your habits and routines could work harder to fulfill your emotional needs. Consider what's most important to you and find ways to treat those values as the most precious resources in your everyday life. Working toward goals that motivate you on a deeper level should be central to your work, and today offers an understanding of the steps you can take to align your professional life with your morals and emotional needs. Unifying your inner and outer selves brings a kind of harmony you may not have known was possible.



Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Innovation can look a lot like disruption, and today is an exercise in determining which changes help you and which are pure distractions. There's a lot of juicy momentum in your creative life; to avoid falling into a fantasy state, only participate in activities that fulfill your big picture goals. For example, instead of doodling, try making a vision board. Or, if you're tempted to binge your favorite show, try a documentary about a topic that could further your educational goals. Make sure what you do now will make a difference long-term.



Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

You are being called to dig into your belief system and see which are yours and which were put upon you in your youth. You have had rebel energy since the day you were born, but now you must consider what exactly it is you're rebelling against. The ways we rely on others can often become so ingrained we don't see how it impacts us, and this is especially true with inherited modes of thinking. Today offers illumination into your allegiances, so you can take control of which rules you wish to break.



Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

Your closest partnerships provide solace from any disruptions you may encounter today. If things seem to go awry or your best-laid plans are thrown off track, leaning on your allies for a sympathetic ear and practical advice is the best way to soothe your anxieties. Something in your life seems to be amiss. It could be that you've felt as though you haven't gotten to connect with your confidantes as much as you've needed. Life isn't meant to be lived alone, so call on those you trust to help lift your spirits.

Sports News



Former national player committed to development

Oslyn "Pigeon" Gregory from the Grays Green Community has committed himself to the development of female basketball in Antigua and Barbuda.

The former national player says his goal is to re-introduce Female basketball program starting from the schools upward.

The 6'4" coach said he is focus mainly on the females because no one apart from Wings wants to commit to the development of the young ladies.

The former national player believes that coaches in Antigua and Barbuda need to pay more attention to the female program and it should be made mandatory that every coach enter



three Female teams from their zone in a national Mini- Girls Basketball program.

Pigeon as he is called presently works with Sea View Farm, Buckleys, JT Ambrose, Liberta, Cobbs Cross, Irene B. Williams and All Saints Secondary.

His local Club is Cyclones Basketball Club, and if you are interested in registering contact 723-

9029

Gregory says COVID-19 has disrupted his summer league so he is in consultation with parents in an attempt to push back the league to September.

Sports News

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Former FIFA executives accused of bribes over world cup bidding

Former FIFA executives took bribes in return for voting for Russia and Qatar to host the World Cup, according to US prosecutors.

In what could be highly significant twist in the FBI's long-running investigation into allegations of football corruption, a new indictment was revealed in the US District Court on Monday.

The documents claim several former FIFA executive committee members were

offered or received bribes in connection with their votes.

Former FIFA vice-president Jack Warner of Trinidad and Tobago was allegedly paid four million pounds through a host of offshore shell companies to back Russia's 2018 bid.

Russia beat England to win the right to host the most recent World Cup in 2018. Warner was president of the North and Central American and Caribbean confederation CONCACAF.





Former FIFA vice-president Jack Warner

The Department of Justice also made allegations against Nicolas Leoz, the former president of South American governing body Conmebol, and ex-Brazil federation supremo Ricardo Teixeira.

Both are accused of taking money in exchange for their votes in favour of Qatar to host 2022 World Cup. Qutar denies allegations.

Former executives at US television giant 21st Century Fox have also been charged in the indictment with making payments to South American football officials to secure broadcast rights.

The FBI is investigating the illicit handshakes and backroom deals hidden in the infrastructure of football events, venues and marketing contracts.

Pepe Guardiola's Mother dies after contracting coronavirus

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola's mother, Dolors Sala Carrio, has died age 82 in Barcelona after contracting coronavirus.

Last month, Guardiola donated one million euros to help fight the outbreak.

The money will be used to purchase medical equipments and protective material for staff involved in treating those admitted to hospital.

Barcelona is in Catelonia, which is one of the areas in Spain with the most concentrated number of cases.

Manchester City on their social media posted everyone associated with the Club sends their most heartfelt sympathy at this most distressing time to Pep, his family and all their friends.



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola

S DOFTS WEDNESDAY 8TH ARPIL 2020



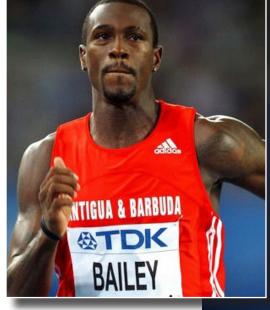
He is back!

Daniel "Bakka" Bailey, the nation's most successful sprinter, is back and has resumed training in anticipation of Tokyo 2021. Bailey, a guest on TIMEOUT Programme on Point FM, said the coronavirus pandemic which led to the games being pushed back to 2021 has given him an opportunity to give it one more shot.

Bakka said he recently contacted his coach Glen Mills informing him of his plans, he noted Mills reacted positively and has since sent him a plan to start his training.

The national record holder at 9.91sec says he plans to do some of his work here before flying out to Jamaica later this year to continue preparation for the 2021 indoor season with an eye on 2021 Olympics.

When quizzed about his relationship with the various national sporting bodies and the media here in Antigua. Bailey said there has been a lack of understanding of what it takes to be and maintain an elite athlete.



Bailey noted that the lack of understanding has continued which led to two former top athletes Miguel Francis and Rai Benjamin switching to represent Great Britain and United States respectively.

The four time Olympian will look to make his fifth appearance next year once the present pandemic blows over. Bakka says at the end of his career he will switch his attention to coaching and assisting young Antiguans excel at the highest level.





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